

The Secret of Missionary Interest

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"Power belongeth unto God!"—Ps. lxii: 11.

"Thine, O Lord, is the power."—I Chron. xxix: 11.

"It is God who worketh."—Phil. ii: 13.

Missionary Gifts

IN *Men and Missions* for May, 1912, the offerings from my own congregation were stated as averaging per member, \$25, to congregational expenses, and \$69 to missions for the past six years. I have been twenty years with this congregation, during which time they have given to missions up to October 1, 1912, the sum of over \$113,700. For fourteen years past they have averaged \$6,770 per year, and for the last six years, \$8,272 per year, while the current expenses of the church are never over \$3,000 a year. This without missionary committee or organization of any kind, or any personal solicitation, but simply by the presentation of the opportunity, more or less, at all services, and by letters from different parts of the field from week to week at every midweek service.

Explaining the Results

In reply to a request for some light upon how this is accomplished, I herewith give all that I am able to state of the reasons for the unusual missionary interest of my church and Bible classes. I believe it to be the blessing of the Lord upon His work, done in His way, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Contrast it with the comparatively meager results of great effort, even though well organized, and judge for yourself. Is it not an illustration of Prov. x:22, R. V. margin, "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and toil addeth nothing thereto"?

The Power of God for the Plans of God

Someone has said that the power of God can only be known in connection with work according to his plan. Without in any way judging or misjudging others, it is my conviction that the following testimony is true concerning His plan for me.

I have been an ordained pastor for over thirty-two years, and have firmly held and taught the Deity of Christ, His vicarious atonement, His present ministry of intercession, His coming again to set up a kingdom of peace and righteousness on this earth, with a righteous Israel as the earthly center; and all the great truths included in, or associated with, these.

For the first ten years of my ministry the missionary spirit did not control me as it has

for the past twenty or more; but note how God has honored His Word and an understanding of His purpose to gather in this age from all nations the Body of Christ, the Church; that so He may send Jesus Christ again to close this age, and restore all things which He has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

As truly as the Lord gave Moses the plan of the tabernacle, and David the plan of the temple (Exodus xxv: 9, 40; 1 Chron. xxviii: 12, 19), leaving no room for suggestions, or improvements, or modifications of any kind from them, so has He as plainly told us His plan for subduing this world to Himself, and making it a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; when nations shall learn war no more, and the Lord Jesus Christ shall be King of kings and Lord of lords. He has also told us His purpose in this present age, and how we may be of use to Him in gathering from all nations a people for His name, His Body the Church, that He may receive His Eve to Himself, and with her subdue all things unto Him in the next age, when Israel shall have become a righteous nation in their own land, and His witnesses to all nations, filling the earth with the fruit of the Spirit.

We are not called to make this world, which lieth in the wicked one, a righteous world, for it cannot be done while the Devil is its god, ruling as he does in politics, and in commerce,

and in social life, and also in much that is called religious. This great enemy of God and man must be removed from the air and the earth; and he will be, and be shut up for a thousand years in the bottomless pit, before he shall be consigned to the lake of fire forever. When the Church shall have been completed and taken up to meet her Lord in the air, he will show himself at his worst ere he shall be cast into the pit.

Devotion to the Will of God

The one supreme thing in David's heart he tells us was to behold the beauty, or, as in the margin, the delight of the Lord (Psalm xxvii: 4), and in Psalm xxxvii: 4, he says, "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." In Isaiah lviii: 13, 14, we are taught that delighting in the Lord implies turning away from our ways, our own pleasure, and our own words. In the only perfect man, the man Jesus Christ, we see one who has wholly and absolutely given up to the will of God, in all things pleasing the Father, and in that perfect will finding His meat and drink and constant delight. The thoughts and ways of the Lord are as far above ours as the heavens are higher than the earth (Isaiah lv: 8, 9); but in our self-conceit and ignorance we prefer our own thoughts and ways, and fail to submit to *Him* who is ready to work out His plan through us when we are willing.

The Church's Mission

To know the Lord, and to make Him known, is the one only thing that we are here for, and to qualify us for that He has given us His word and His Spirit. When subject to the Teacher and His one text-book, we may expect to become somewhat proficient disciples, but not otherwise. Bible study and missions are, therefore, the calling of every believer, and we may expect a realization of 2 Chron. xvi: 9, and a fulfilment of Jer. xxxiii: 3, when we aim to walk worthy of our calling. The so-called social element in church life, including entertainments, lectures, suppers and all that is associated with what the late Dr. A. J. Gordon was want to call "the cooking-stove apostasy," is in no sense a part of our calling, and seems to me as much out of place as amusements would have been on the *Titanic*, after it appeared as if she must go down. Our Lord saw people as lost, and He came to save them, not to entertain or amuse them. When His people are willing to see with His eyes, and live His life, there will be no occasion to work up a missionary interest in the churches, for His heart of compassion in us will crowd out all but the preaching of the Gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and Matt. vi: 33 will be fulfilled to such as thus seek to hasten His kingdom.

Many Called, Few Chosen

Many are called, but few are willing to be His very own, separated wholly unto Him, in this matter of serving the living God, and waiting for His Son from heaven, while seeking to complete the Church, and bring to pass the fulfillment of 1 Thess. iv: 16-18. Few seem willing to be separate from all the schemes to reform and uplift that which can neither be reformed nor uplifted, a world lying in the wicked one, and give themselves to the one business of saving souls by the blood of Jesus Christ.

During this present age, since our Lord's rejection as Israel's Messiah, and the consequent postponement of His kingdom until His return, He has sent the Holy Spirit to testify to His resurrection and ascension, and present priesthood, and to gather to Himself all the "whosoever" who will come to Him, that they may with Him share His glory when He shall come again. To gather these living stones for the temple now being builded (Eph. ii: 19-22; 1 Peter ii: 3-10), is the present occupation of all true believers, and anything that does not tend to this we should have neither time nor inclination for. For nearly forty years these truths have held me with ever-increasing power, and in the last twenty-three years have resulted in \$620,851.76, up to December 31, 1911, to help gather the "whosoever" from all the earth. This year (1912) has increased that amount to Dec. 1st over \$51,770.00.

A Missionary Pastor

A missionary pastor will make a missionary church, and efforts to obtain money in worldly ways are never necessary, nor in order. Our current expenses are easily met, and there is no indebtedness except that of helping to give the Gospel to all the world, that the Church may be completed.

Let any minister honor God by believing His Word and walking with Him in his plan, and I believe he will see God working in and through him. Why should there not be hundreds thus used as God's witnesses in these days of fearful unbelief?

My church is, as to denomination, Reformed Episcopal, but really it is a union church of Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, Lutherans and Friends—whose aim is Bible study and missions.

I have had for many years as many as nine or more weekly Bible classes in as many different cities attended by over 1,000 people. On account of being laid aside by illness the first eleven weeks of 1912, and consequent lack of health to continue so strenuous a life, I have now only five weekly classes in Brooklyn, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, attended by about 600 people; and yet this is the best year but one financially in all our history.

Further light on church and class work may be obtained from our little monthly *Kingdom*

Tidings, sample copies of which we will gladly mail to any address.

Not many are called upon to take part in great movements, but if some other pastors with small congregations shall be encouraged by this testimony to let God use them as He desires to do, and contentedly abide with Him and for Him, they also will be able to bear testimony to His faithfulness and His power.
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